

Waleed Mohammed Al Smani
Minister of Justice
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
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Dear Minister of Justice,

I am writing to express my concern that the Specialized Criminal Court in Saudi Arabia has sentenced 29-year-old fitness instructor and women's rights activist, Manahel al-Otaibi, to 11 years in prison on "terrorist offenses" after a secret trial.

Manahel al-Otaibi was arrested on November 16, 2022 and charged with violating the Anti-Cyber Crime Law for tweeting hashtags in support of women's rights and posting photos on Snapchat of herself at the mall wearing "immodest" clothing. On April 14, 2024, after a period more than five months of enforced disappearance, Manahel al-Otaibi called her family to inform them that she is being held in solitary confinement in al-Malaz Prison with a broken leg after being brutally beaten, and without access to medical care.

I urge you to order the immediate and unconditional release of Manahel al-Otaibi, as she has been convicted solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression. Pending her release, she must be granted immediate access to medical care, and her allegations of torture and other ill-treatment must be impartially investigated.

Yours sincerely,

CC: Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the United States
Her Royal Highness Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
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